



# BOARD TALK

Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association

This page is an exciting new venture through the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association, and will be a regular feature of the monthly newsletter. It is being created **WITH and FOR** members of *appointed and elected boards*, to provide an opportunity for them to share and learn from each other. Please make copies of this page and hand it out to board members each month.

## TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

The price of gas has changed frequently during the past two years, and is likely to rise again either due to oil prices or to an increase in the gas tax. At the same time, Massachusetts residents are not immune to the “epidemic” of overweight children and adults, and in many cases an increase in obesity. So, how can your organization become involved with both and help out?

The easiest way is to review how transportation is used for your programs and facilities.

Do you move children participating in a program or camp from one location to another on a bus? Is the distance short enough that the children could walk to that secondary location? Can you alter your field trip program to walk to places closer to “home”?

Does your community or organization support bicycles and their safe uses? Is there a bicycle plan in place?

Massachusetts has received federal funds to help communities make improvements to enhance the use of bicycles. The Governor has pledged to increase support for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. But according to a recent article in the Boston Globe (April 14, 2009) of the \$135 million that Massachusetts has received since 1991, only \$51.1 million has been spent. In comparison, Connecticut and Rhode Island have

each spent approximately 99% of their allocations. The MA Executive Office of Transportation has stated its overhauling its procedure for handling grant applications. Ask your local representatives to assist you in researching how to access these grant opportunities.

In Eastern Massachusetts, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has a 100% reimbursable grant program for the purchase of bicycle racks. Some communities have been accessing the funds available to their communities, including Arlington, Beverly, Brookline, Cambridge, Dedham, Duxbury, Lexington, Lincoln, Newton, Reading, Salem, Watertown, Wellesley and Weymouth. This information is available at the MAPC website at [www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org)

The bicycle racks need to be placed at public locations including town centers, public buildings, transit stations, bus stops, schools, libraries, and of course recreational facilities.

Also on their website are some bicycle plan guides. Both Watertown and Cambridge plans can be found on this website as well as some national guidelines.

Most importantly - get out and model what you want your residents and participants to do. Walk! Ride a bike! Find time to enjoy the summer months!

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Patricia Carey, CPRP, Director  
Needham Park and Recreation Commission  
1471 Highland Avenue - Needham, MA 02492  
Telephone: (781) 455-7521  
E-Mail: [pcarey@town.needham.ma.us](mailto:pcarey@town.needham.ma.us)

Renee Dufour, CPRP, MRPA President  
MA Dept of Conservation & Recreation  
200 Davol Street - Fall River, MA 02720  
Telephone: (508) 675-3455  
E-Mail: [Renee.Dufour@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:Renee.Dufour@massmail.state.ma.us)